

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00117 122139Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITS 1301
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

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S.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: QUEBEC FEDERALISTS REJECT OTTAWA SILVER

1. SERIOUS DISPUTE OVER ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
SUBVENTION TO HELP FINANCE PRE-REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN HAS ARISEN
WITHIN COORDINATING COMMITTEE SET UP BY QUEBEC FEDERALISTS
TO CONCERT EFFORTS OF VARIOUS GROUPS DEDICATED TO THE DEFEAT
OF SOVEREIGNTIST REFERENDUM. ISSUE AROSE WHEN QUEBEC-CANADA
MOUVEMENT ACCEPTED 265,000 DOLLARS GRANT FROM MARC LALONDE'S
FEDERAL PROVINCIAL SECRETARIAT IN OTTAWA.

2. VIRTUALLY ALL THE OTHER FEDERALIST GROUPS REPRESENTED ON
THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE-INCLUDING ALL OF THE FEDERALIST
POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES - HAVE TAKEN THE POSITION
THAT IT WOULD BE IMPROPER AND UNWISE TO ACCEPT FEDERAL FUNDS
TO FINANCE WHAT THE MONTREAL GAZETTE CHARACTERIZED IN A CRITICAL
EDITORIAL ON APRIL 11 AS AN OSTENSIBLE "GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT."
QUEBEC MINISTER FOR ELECTORAL AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM,
ROBERT BURNS, IN COMMENTING ON GRANT ASKED HOW ENGLISH SPEAKING
QUEBECERS WOULD REACT IF GOQ FUNDED PRO-INDEPENDENCE GROUP
SUCH AS ST JEAN BAPTISTE SOCIETY OR MOUVEMENT NATIONALE
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DES QUEBECOIS? PQ, HE SAID, HAS PROMISED TO FINANCE ITS
CAMPAIGN FROM POPULAR SUBSCRIPTIONS.

3. MOST FEDERALISTS HERE CONTEND THAT ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL
MONEY WOULD PLAY INTO PQ HANDS BY GIVING IMPRESSION THAT QUEBEC
FEDERALISTS ARE DEPENDENT ON SUPPORT FROM OTTAWA. THEY FURTHER ASSERT

THAT SYMBOLIC EFFECT OF REFERENDUM DEFEAT WOULD BE DIMINISHED BY
APPEARANCE OF SUCH DEPENDENCE. BESIDES, MANY FEDERALISTS HAVE NOW
PRIVATELY COME TO CONCLUSION THAT DEFEATING REFERENDUM MAY NOT
BE AS DESPERATELY DIFFICULT AS IT APPEARED A YEAR AGO. THEREFORE,
THEY WOULD PREFER SLAY THE SEPERATIST DRAGON THEMSELVES WITHOUT
OUTSIDE HELP WHICH MIGHT BE SOURCE OF FUTURE EMBARRASSMENT.
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